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Patient Satisfaction in a Gynecology- Obstetrics Service at Ibn Al Jazzar University Hospital in Tunisia: A Cross- Sectional Study (2023)

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Abstract

Background: Patient satisfaction is a crucial indicator of healthcare quality, particularly in gynecology-obstetrics services where care involves intimate and sensitive aspects of women's health. Understanding patient perspectives is essential for improving service delivery and healthcare outcomes.

Objective: To evaluate patient satisfaction levels in the gynecology-obstetrics service at Ibn Al Jazzar University Hospital in Kairouan, Tunisia.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted from January to March 2023 among 276 patients hospitalized in the gynecology-obstetrics service. Data was collected using a validated questionnaire developed by the General Directorate of Public Health Structures (DGSSP) in collaboration with the Observatory on the Performance of Organizations and Health Systems at the University of Montreal (OPOSSUM). The questionnaire assessed overall satisfaction and seven specific domains: accessibility, continuity, comprehensiveness, technical quality, humanization, environment, and conditions of stay. Satisfaction was measured using a 6-point Likert scale (0-5).

Results: The overall satisfaction rate was 37%. Domain-specific satisfaction rates varied considerably: accessibility of care (65.6%), continuity of care (41.7%), comprehensiveness of care (16.3%), technical quality of care (52.9%), humanization (37.0%), environment (41.3%), and conditions of stay (5.1%). Physician competence (80.8%) and staff cleanliness and attire (83.7%) received the highest satisfaction ratings, while visiting areas (0%) and visiting hours (5.1%) received the lowest.

Conclusion: While overall patient satisfaction in the gynecology-obstetrics service was moderate, significant variations existed across different domains. The findings highlight areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. Implementing targeted

interventions, including digital solutions like the GynéSatis mobile application, could enhance patient experience and healthcare quality in this setting.

Keywords: Patient satisfaction, gynecology-obstetrics, healthcare quality, Tunisia, patient experience, hospital care

1. Introduction

Patient satisfaction has emerged as a critical indicator of healthcare quality and an essential component of patient-centered care. In gynecology and obstetrics services, where care involves intimate and often sensitive aspects of women's health, understanding and addressing patient satisfaction becomes particularly important. The satisfaction of patients is closely linked to key aspects such as accessibility of care, organization of services, and the attitude of healthcare providers [1,2]. High satisfaction rates are generally associated with quality care, while unsatisfactory levels may signal deficiencies requiring targeted improvements [3].

The evaluation of patient satisfaction in gynecology-obstetrics settings is crucial due to the intimate and often delicate nature of health issues addressed [4-7]. Studying both overall satisfaction and satisfaction by specific domains offers valuable insights for adapting health services, promoting a personalized and sensitive approach, and providing responses tailored to women's particular needs [8,9]. Furthermore, regular assessment of satisfaction and careful analysis of patient feedback provide essential information for healthcare professionals and service managers [10-13]. This process helps identify areas requiring continuous improvement, adjust policies and procedures, and maintain high standards of care delivery over time [8].

In Tunisia, healthcare services face numerous challenges, including resource constraints, high patient volumes, and evolving healthcare needs. The gynecology-obstetrics service at Ibn Al Jazzar University Hospital in Kairouan serves a large population, including many from disadvantaged and rural areas. Understanding patient satisfaction in this context is essential for identifying strengths and weaknesses in service delivery and implementing targeted improvements.

The present study aims to evaluate patient satisfaction levels in the gynecology- obstetrics service at Ibn Al Jazzar University Hospital in Kairouan, Tunisia. By assessing both overall satisfaction and satisfaction across specific domains, this research seeks to provide valuable insights for healthcare providers, administrators, and

policymakers to enhance the quality of care provided to women in this setting.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Study Design and Setting

This cross-sectional study was conducted at the gynecology-obstetrics service of Ibn Al Jazzar University Hospital in Kairouan, Tunisia. The study period extended from January 1 to March 31, 2023.

2.2 Study Population and Sampling

The study population comprised patients hospitalized in the gynecology-obstetrics service during the study period. Inclusion criteria were: (1) patients aged 18 years or older, (2) hospitalization duration of at least 48 hours, (3) discharge destination being home, and (4) provision of informed consent. Patients who did not meet these criteria or declined to participate were excluded. A total of 276 patients were included in the final analysis.

2.3 Data Collection Tool

Data was collected using a questionnaire developed in Arabic by the General Directorate of Public Health Structures (DGSSP) in collaboration with the Observatory on the Performance of Organizations and Health Systems at the University of Montreal (OPOSSUM). The questionnaire was specifically designed to study satisfaction among hospitalized patients in various public health structures in Tunisia and was translated and validated by the project group.

The self-administered questionnaire explored overall patient satisfaction and seven specific domains:

1. Accessibility of care: Waiting times for appointments, ease of access by public transportation or car, ease of contacting physicians, and waiting times for diagnostic services.
2. Continuity of care: Physician's knowledge of medical history, explanations about treatments and medications, information about necessary care, seeing the same physician, and collaboration among healthcare professionals.
3. Comprehensiveness of care: Consideration of material and social conditions and mental health,

and consideration of all health problems.

4. Technical quality of care: Physician competence, competence of other healthcare staff, and adherence to hygiene measures.
5. Humanization: Time dedicated by physician, staff patience, staff respect, confidentiality of medical information, and respect for physical privacy.
6. Environment: Facility design for privacy, cleanliness of premises, tranquility of premises, and staff cleanliness and attire.
7. Conditions of stay: Accommodation conditions, food quality, visiting hours, and visiting areas.

For all items, participants were asked to respond on a 6-point Likert scale (0: very poor, 1: poor, 2: fair, 3: good, 4: very good, and 5: excellent).

2.4 Data Collection Procedure

The self-administered questionnaire was distributed in paper format to all eligible and consenting patients. For patients who could not read, a team of trained volunteer interviewers assisted in completing the questionnaire. Questionnaires were considered valid if they contained responses to at least half of the questions and did not have the same response to all questions.

2.5 Data Analysis

For satisfaction calculation: - By item: Responses of 3, 4, and 5 (good, very good, and excellent) were considered to reflect an acceptable level of satisfaction. - By domain: A domain was considered satisfactory if the satisfaction level was acceptable in 75% or more of its items.

Descriptive statistics were used to detail the general characteristics of patients. Results were presented in tabular and graphical formats. The SPSS V20 software was used for data entry and analysis.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

Prior approval was obtained to conduct this study exclusively in the gynecology- obstetrics service of Ibn Al Jazzar University Hospital in Kairouan, with the support of the department head and unit managers. Anonymity and confidentiality were respected throughout the study.

3. Results

3.1 Sociodemographic Characteristics of

Participants

The mean age of the women surveyed was 30 ± 8 years,

with extremes ranging from 18 to 62 years. Most patients resided in Kairouan city (38.1%) and surrounding areas, with some coming from neighboring governorates such as Mahdia (2.2%) and Sidi Bouzid (1.1%).

The majority of women were educated (92%), with 28.6% having primary education, 51.1% secondary education, and 12.3% higher education. Approximately half (54.7%) were covered by a health insurance scheme, and most had a low (45.3%) or medium (46.0%) socioeconomic level.

3.2 Overall Satisfaction Rate

The overall satisfaction rate among patients hospitalized in the gynecology-obstetrics service was 37%. This rate represents the percentage of patients who rated the overall quality of care and services received as good, very good, or excellent.

3.3 Satisfaction by Domains

3.3.1 Accessibility of Care (65.6%)

The domain of accessibility of care had the highest satisfaction rate among all domains (65.6%). The satisfaction rates for specific items within this domain were: - Ease of access by public transportation or car: 55.4% - Ease of contacting physicians when needed: 45.7% - Waiting time for diagnostic services: 76.8% - Waiting time for hospitalization appointments: 61.6%

3.3.2 Continuity of Care (41.7%)

The satisfaction rate for the continuity of care domain was 41.7%. The satisfaction rates for specific items within this domain were: - Physician's knowledge of medical history: 63.0% - Explanations about treatments and medications: 47.1% - Information about necessary care: 50.4% - Seeing the same physician: 15.2% - Collaboration among healthcare professionals: 52.2%

3.3.3 Comprehensiveness of Care (16.3%)

The comprehensiveness of care domain had a satisfaction rate of 16.3%. The satisfaction rates for specific items within this domain were: - Consideration of material and social conditions and mental health: 16.3% - Consideration of all health problems: 63.8%

3.3.4 Technical Quality of Care (52.9%)

The satisfaction rate for the technical quality of care domain was 52.9%. The satisfaction rates for specific items within this domain were: - Physician competence:

80.8% - Competence of other healthcare staff: 56.9% - Adherence to hygiene measures: 61.6%

3.3.5 Humanization (37.0%)

The humanization domain had a satisfaction rate of 37.0%. The satisfaction rates for specific items within this domain were: - Time dedicated by physician: 38.8% - Staff patience: 38.0% - Staff respect: 44.2% - Confidentiality of medical information: 44.2% - Respect for physical privacy: 42.4%

3.3.6 Environment (41.3%)

The satisfaction rate for the environment domain was 41.3%. The satisfaction rates for specific items within this domain were: - Facility design for privacy: 33.3% - Cleanliness of premises: 60.5% - Tranquility of premises: 15.6% - Staff cleanliness and attire: 83.7%

3.3.7 Conditions of Stay (5.1%)

The conditions of stay domain had the lowest satisfaction rate among all domains (5.1%). The satisfaction rates for specific items within this domain were: - Accommodation conditions: 18.5% - Food quality: 5.1% - Visiting hours: 5.1% - Visiting areas: 0.0%

4. Discussion

4.1 Overall Satisfaction Rate

The overall satisfaction rate of 37% among patients hospitalized in the gynecology- obstetrics service at Ibn Al Jazzar University Hospital in Kairouan reflects a moderate level of satisfaction. This rate is lower than those reported in similar studies conducted in other settings. For instance, a study in Rwanda reported a satisfaction rate of 62.8% [14], while studies in Poland and Spain reported rates of 95% and 94.5%, respectively [15,16]. Even within Tunisia, a previous study conducted in Sousse reported a higher satisfaction rate of 51% [17].

Several factors may contribute to this relatively low satisfaction rate. Ibn Al Jazzar University Hospital is the only university hospital in the region, and its gynecology- obstetrics service is the only public service offering gynecological care. Consequently, the service experiences a high patient volume, resulting in excessive workload for healthcare providers [18]. Additionally, resource constraints, including shortages of material resources, financial limitations, and insufficient specialist physicians, may further impact the quality of care and patient satisfaction [18-20].

Despite these challenges, it is important to note that the satisfaction rate of 37% represents a significant proportion of patients who rated their care as good, very good, or excellent. This suggests that despite resource constraints, the service is still able to provide satisfactory care to a substantial number of patients.

4.2 Domain-Specific Satisfaction

4.2.1 Strengths

Accessibility of Care (65.6%): The high satisfaction rate for this domain, particularly for waiting time for diagnostic services (76.8%), suggests that the service has implemented effective measures to facilitate access to care. This is particularly noteworthy given the geographical challenges, with many patients coming from rural areas located up to 80 km from the hospital [18].

Technical Quality of Care (52.9%): The high satisfaction rate for physician competence (80.8%) indicates that patients have confidence in the medical expertise of the physicians. This is a crucial aspect of care, as physician competence is fundamental to patient trust and treatment outcomes.

Continuity of Care (41.7%): The moderate satisfaction rate for this domain, with relatively high rates for physician's knowledge of medical history (63.0%) and collaboration among healthcare professionals (52.2%), suggests that the service has made efforts to ensure continuity of care. This is essential in gynecology- obstetrics, where care often spans prenatal, delivery, and postnatal phases.

Comprehensiveness of Care (16.3%): While the overall satisfaction rate for this domain is low, the high rate for consideration of all health problems (63.8%) indicates that physicians are attentive to patients' comprehensive health needs. This holistic approach is crucial for effective gynecological and obstetrical care.

4.2.2 Areas Needing Improvement

Conditions of Stay (5.1%): The extremely low satisfaction rate for this domain, particularly for visiting areas (0.0%) and visiting hours (5.1%), highlights a critical area for improvement. The physical environment and amenities significantly impact patient experience and should be addressed as a priority.

Humanization (37.0%): The moderate satisfaction rates for items in this domain suggest a need for improvement

in the interpersonal aspects of care. Enhancing communication, respect, and privacy could significantly improve patient experience.

Environment (41.3%): The low satisfaction rate for tranquility of premises (15.6%) indicates issues with noise levels, which can negatively impact patient rest and recovery. Implementing noise reduction strategies could enhance patient comfort.

4.3 Factors Affecting Patient Satisfaction

Several factors may influence patient satisfaction in this setting:

Resource Constraints: Limited material and human resources can impact service quality and availability, affecting patient satisfaction.

High Patient Volume: The high demand for services can lead to rushed consultations, long waiting times, and reduced personalized attention.

Patient Expectations: Patients' expectations, shaped by their previous experiences, cultural background, and knowledge about healthcare, can influence their satisfaction levels.

Socioeconomic Factors: The predominantly low to medium socioeconomic status of patients may affect their access to care and their expectations and perceptions of service quality.

4.4 Study Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, as with any self-reported measure, there is potential for information bias. Second, the question about overall satisfaction was asked at the end of the questionnaire, which may have influenced responses based on the preceding domain-specific questions. Third, the study was conducted in a single center, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other settings.

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made to improve patient satisfaction in the gynecology-obstetrics service:

5.1 Improving Access to Care

- Implement telemedicine services to reduce the need for in-person visits, particularly for patients from remote areas.
- Develop mobile applications for appointment scheduling to streamline the process and reduce

waiting times.

- Enhance transportation options or provide transportation assistance for patients from remote areas.

5.2 Enhancing Hospitality Quality

- Improve room cleanliness and maintenance through regular cleaning schedules and quality checks.
- Enhance bed comfort by investing in better mattresses and bedding.
- Implement noise control measures, such as designated quiet hours and noise reduction protocols.
- Redesign facilities to ensure patient privacy, including private consultation spaces and adequate curtains or partitions in shared rooms.

5.3 Improving Continuity and Comprehensiveness of Care

- Implement electronic medical records to enhance information sharing among healthcare providers and improve continuity of care.
- Develop standardized protocols for comprehensive patient assessment, including physical, psychological, and social aspects.
- Provide training for healthcare providers on holistic care approaches and effective communication.

5.4 Enhancing Technical Quality and Humanization

- Invest in ongoing professional development for healthcare providers to maintain and enhance their competencies.
- Implement regular training on patient-centered care, communication skills, and cultural sensitivity.
- Establish clear protocols for ensuring patient privacy and confidentiality.

5.5 Innovative Solutions: GynéSatis Mobile Application

To address many of the identified issues, we have developed the GynéSatis mobile application, which is currently being tested. This Android application provides a secure platform for hospitalized patients to report problems encountered during their stay. Key features include:

- Secure login with personal ID and password
- Problem reporting categorized by type (pain, nursing care, cleanliness, etc.)

- Direct communication with medical staff
- Real-time tracking of requests
- Informative resources on maternity care
- Real-time notifications
- Satisfaction surveys

The application aims to improve communication between patients and medical staff, enable rapid intervention for reported problems, increase patient satisfaction by providing an easy way to express concerns, and promote patient autonomy and engagement in their care.

6. Conclusion

This study provides valuable insights into patient satisfaction levels in the gynecology- obstetrics service at Ibn Al Jazzar University Hospital in Kairouan, Tunisia. The overall satisfaction rate of 37%, while moderate, highlights both strengths and areas for improvement in service delivery.

The findings underscore the importance of a multifaceted approach to improving patient satisfaction, addressing not only clinical aspects of care but also the physical environment, interpersonal interactions, and accessibility. The implementation of innovative solutions, such as the GynéSatis mobile application, represents a promising approach to enhancing patient experience and engagement.

Regular assessment of patient satisfaction is essential for monitoring the quality of care and guiding improvement efforts. By addressing the identified areas for improvement and building on existing strengths, the gynecology-obstetrics service can enhance patient satisfaction, improve healthcare outcomes, and provide a more positive experience for women seeking care.

Future research should explore the impact of implemented improvements on patient satisfaction, investigate the relationship between satisfaction and clinical outcomes, and examine the effectiveness of innovative solutions like the GynéSatis application in enhancing patient experience.

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